

# Fatigue Management toolbox talk

A simple, 5 minute outline of what to cover in a toolbox talk on Fatigue Management.



[Download a Fatigue Management toolbox talk pdf](#)

Fatigue is a state of mental or physical exhaustion that reduces your ability work safely and effectively. Fatigue can be work related or non-work related or a combination of both and can build up over time. This can lead to workplace incidents and injuries.

## Why run a Fatigue Management Toolbox Talk?

- Who's responsible for fatigue management
- Signs of fatigue
- Causes of fatigue
- How to manage fatigue

## Who's Responsible for Fatigue Management

Both employers and employees are responsible for managing fatigue. Worker engagement on this issue is a good way to raise concerns, make suggestions and ask questions.

## Signs of fatigue

The effects of fatigue can be short term, or they could be long term (burnout). Signs a person may be experiencing fatigue are:

- Short-term memory problems and finding it hard to concentrate
- Poor decision making or errors in judgment
- Reduced hand-eye coordination or slow reflexes

- Mood swings
- Trouble solving problems
- Job performance is affected
- Trouble focusing
- Unable to recall last thought or conversation

## **Causes of Fatigue**

- Shift work
- Working long hours
- Sleep disruption
- Environmental factors – climate
- Physical work factors – using tools that vibrate and type of work i.e. heavy labour
- Repetitive work
- Mental work demands - tasks that require intense concentration, regular criticism, or pressure to meet deadlines
- Excessive commuting
- Non-work related events – separation of a partner, loss of a loved one

## **How to Manage Fatigue**

Some ways to manage fatigue are:

- Appropriate rest breaks
- Using machinery to assist with tasks – where appropriate
- Appropriate human resources
- Avoid working in extreme climate
- Drink enough fluids to maintain hydration
- Job rotations
- Ensure you regularly get 7-8 hours' sleep before starting work
- Do not rely on stimulants – coffee and nicotine only provide a temporary boost
- Diet - Eat a balanced diet with foods that provide slow release energy (e.g. wholegrains)

## **Key takeaways:**

- *Fatigue is a hazard in the workplace*
- *Look after yourself*
- *Engage with your work colleagues and employers*

*New Zealand Resources:*

<https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/fatigue/managing-the-risks-of-shift-work/>

<https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/fatigue/pamphlets/>

See all our toolbox talk topics here

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